

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE B-1

Approved For Release 2004/10/13 : CIA-RDP88-01315R000300550028-2  
WASHINGTON POST  
3 MARCH 1977

# An Aura of Danger, Worldly Wisdom And the 'New Missionary' Spirit

By Marjorie Hyer and William Gildea

There was Max von Sydow, ridiculous in his rusty black frock coat in all that Hawaiian sunshine, putting mother hubbards on the Hawaiian women and flying into a tantrum whenever the brown-skinned folks tried to kick up their heels a bit.

Or Katharine Hepburn in "The African Queen," all whalebone and high-button collar, in the jungle heat, ordering the natives around, fussing at Humphrey Bogart and his loutish ways.

In the real world, of course, missionaries don't look or act like that. Idi Amin knows that. It is the real missionaries whom the Ugandan president ordered to show up at Entebbe Airport before he changed his mind and said, well, maybe later on. It was a real missionary whose battered body was found Tuesday in Rhodesia, the 11th missionary to die there in the last three months of fighting between the Rhodesian government and black guerrillas.

Well over half of some 240 Americans now in Uganda are estimated to be missionaries. Of that number about a third are Roman Catholics; the rest are mostly members of conservative evangelical groups including the Southern Baptist Convention, and the African Inland Mission.

Christian leaders in Africa and the rest of the world have watched the Uganda situation with growing anxiety ever since the death two weeks ago of Anglican Archbishop Janani Luwum and the only two remaining Christian members of Amin's cabinet. Did these deaths, and reported large-scale massacres of members of the predominantly Christian Langi and Acholi tribes, signal a religious war?

Whether their lives are in danger, the Christian missionaries of Uganda, or indeed anywhere, have more on their minds these days than mother hubbards.

While dying for one's faith is highly spoken of in Christian song and prayer, martyrdom is an end sought by few. Who, then, are the "new" missionaries, and why do they enlist?

"You feel a calling to it," explains one Catholic priest who served in Uganda from 1971 to 1975, and who hopes to return. (He asked that his name not be used because of "problems" he might encounter trying to re-enter Uganda.)

There is, he explains, a feeling of "belonging" there and a belief that you are doing something worthwhile.

"I don't want to kid you, I'm worried about the situation out there," he says. "But I'm looking forward to going back. Having been out there, you get into the language and the culture. It's something you grow into. It becomes part of you. You get to feel at home, and you want to go back again."

This 32-year-old priest is one of 7,010 American Catholic missionaries and 36,950 Protestant ones working overseas today. It is, incidentally, the largest Protestant mission force in history. Among the Protestants, the Southern Baptists, with some 2,700 missionaries in 85 countries, are leaders, with the Wycliffe Bible Translators and Seventh-Day Adventists close behind.

"We are basically there to share the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ—how he died for our sins," explains Bob Stanley, for 10 years a Southern Baptist missionary in the Philippines and now an executive with the denomination's mission board in Richmond.

Stanley is a layman, a former newspaperman and journalism teacher.

"It was in 1966; I was 37 at the time. I was teaching journalism at North Texas State University at Denton."

This was after eight years as a newsman for the Dallas Times Herald. "A representative from the Southern

Baptist Convention mission board came and talked at our church and I got the feeling that perhaps God was wanting us—that maybe the publications experience I had had could be used in the Lord's work.

"Of course I grew up in the Southern Baptist church, where all the local activities taught us that it was our responsibility to share the good news of Christ. When you think about it, going overseas as a missionary is just doing that same thing in a different situation. So it became clear to us, after many consultations (with mission

board executives) that God was calling us to be missionaries."

So, in mid-career, Stanley pulled up stakes and he and his wife went to the Philippines where he headed church publications work for the Philippine Baptist Mission.

Major Protestant denominations express things differently from evangelical Christians like the Southern Baptists. "Competence, commitment and worldly wisdom" is the way United Methodist Avery Manchester sums up his ideal missionary. A former missionary himself, Manchester is candidate-secretary for the Methodists' New York-based board for global ministries and screens all applicants.

"We need competence in their particular area of specialization—medicine, education or whatever—so they have been tempered and tested by training and experience," Manchester explains.

"But that has to be balanced out by commitment, so that the adrenalin of being in a new country, a strange culture, doesn't cause them to lose their heads."

The "worldly wisdom" is needed, he says, "so they don't get conned by the CIA." After a considerable flap last year, the CIA promised to stop trying to elicit information from missionaries. Taking no chances, the Methodists will get sacked immediately if they talk to the CIA.

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